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ELEMENTS OF WRITING ABOUT A LITERARY WORK--A STUDY OF RESPONSE TO LITERATURE.

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THIS RESEARCH REPORT DESCRIBES A DETAILED CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM FOR THE INDIVIDUAL "ELEMENTS," OR TYPES OF RESPONSES, WHICH MAKE UP THE READER'S TOTAL RESPONSE TO LITERATURE AS IT TAKES FORM IN WRITTEN COMMENTARY ON LITERARY WORKS. CHAPTER 1 DISCUSSES THE ORIGIN OF THE STUDY AND DEFINES ELEMENTS AND THE CATEGORICAL SYSTEM USED IN CLASSIFYING THEM. CHAPTER 2 ELABORATES THE CATEGORIES ("ENGAGEMENT-INVOLVEMENT," "PERCEPTION," "INTERPRETATION," AND "EVALUATION"), SUBCATEGORIES, AND ELEMENTS, AND INCLUDES EXAMPLES OF EACH. CHAPTER 3 DETAILS THE USES OF THIS SYSTEM IN RESEARCH AND EXPLAINS WHEN IT IS MOST VALUABLE TO REPORT BY ELEMENT, CATEGORY, SUBCATEGORY, OR PARADIGM OF ELEMENTS. CHAPTER 4 ASSESSES THE IMPLICATIONS OF THIS CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM FOR TEACHING, PARTICULARLY AS ITS USE CAN AFFECT APPROACHES TO TEACHING LITERATURE AND CONDUCTING CLASS DISCUSSIONS ON INDIVIDUAL LITERARY WORKS. APPENDICES CONTAIN A DEMONSTRATION OF HOW CRITICAL ESSAYS CAN BE ANALYZED BY ELEMENTS, AND A SUMMARY LIST OF THE ELEMENTS, SUBCATEGORIES, AND CATEGORIES. (THIS REPORT IS ALSO AVAILABLE FOR $1.50 FROM THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH, 508 SOUTH SIXTH STREET, CHAMPAIGN, ILLINOIS 61820, STOCK NO. 14754.) (DL)

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Elements * of Writing about a Literary Work:

* A Study of Response to Literature

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with Victoria Rippere

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PURPOSES OF THIS STUDY

To find a basis for comparing responses to literature by students, teachers, and critics of different countries or traditions.

To discover a means of describing the process or the constituents of writing about literature, whether that writing be critical or subcritical and noncritical.

To inspect the counters or procedures used by those who respond to and write about literature.

To acquaint researchers with the "elements" of writing about literature that individual writers draw from and combine in fashioning their essays.

To set forth a scheme for content analysis of expressed responses to a literary work.

National Council of Teachers of English
Research Report No. 9

Elements of Writing about a Literary Work: A Study of Response to Literature

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ELEMENTS OF WRITING ABOUT A LITERARY WORK:

A STUDY OF RESPONSE TO LITERATURE

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University of Illinois, 1968-
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Empirical research has not contributed notably to our understanding of the processes and procedures involved in literary education. Despite occasional brilliant studies, researchers thus far have only a limited understanding of the complex dimensions of reader response and thus have been unable to construct evaluative instruments with which to analyze reader reaction. Until better ways of assessing response are available, we are not likely to stimulate many valuable and useful studies of the teaching and learning of literature.

This study by Alan Purves contributes significantly to our understanding of the broad dimensions of response to literature. As the author himself cautions, his method of classifying the elements of writing about literature, embracing as it does such a variety of approaches, may err in its very inclusiveness. Yet surely it suggests the complex problems faced by teachers and researchers. None but the most skillful and sensitive reader of a literary work would ever approach this broad spectrum of response and then seldom, if ever, in relation to a single literary selection. Nor would any school wish to set about teaching students about all of the elements listed here, much less expect of them such complexity of response. Yet the range of possible elements may suggest to teachers and researchers alike neglected aspects of literary response. Moreover, the four basic categories —Engagement-Involvement, Perception, Interpretation, Evaluation— form a solid framework for the total schema and in many ways offer an ordered and a reasonably sophisticated portrait of what research has tried thus far to demonstrate about response to literature.

The elements of writing about literature are not necessarily identical with the elements of response. Reactions secured through written protocols may reflect more what students have been taught to think and feel about literature, rather than what they actually think and feel. Still, one may assume that what is taught will measurably affect personal response and that, consequently, from this complex and highly detailed study of the elements of writing about literature, researchers can develop useful new ways of assessing reader responses.

James R. Squire
For the Committee on Research

September 1967

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In the Introduction, I have indicated the great number of people who in one way or another contributed to the formulation of the ideas contained in this book. I should like here to express my thanks to them, and particularly to Mrs. Marlene Bullock, who coped with my scrawl and typed two versions of the manuscript, and to Mrs. Enid Olson for her gracious editing. Two other people must be singled out, for it was they who encouraged me to work on this project and who served as constant critics. They are A. W. Foshay, who is a great teacher, and my wife, Anita, who has continued to encourage me and who first showed me the importance of involvement.

Alan C. Purves

Princeton, New Jersey

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INTRODUCTION

Literature teachers often discuss but seldom define response to literature. They know it is important in the literature classroom and is an assumption in every literature curriculum. Aware that it is not quite the same as what psychologists call response to a stimulus, teachers realize that response to literature is mental, emotional, intellectual, sensory, physical. It encompasses the cognitive, affective, perceptual, and psychomotor activities that the reader of a poem, a story, or a novel performs as he reads or after he has read.

Yet most teachers know that, in the classroom, a student's response will be like an iceberg: only a small part will become apparent to the teacher or even to the student himself. Teachers deal with the visible part of the iceberg whenever they lead a class discussion or assign an essay topic on a literary work. Even this expressed response has not been as closely examined as it might be.

When I was asked to participate in an international study of student achievement in literature, I began to see the need for an outline, a schema, for content analysis that would be applicable to a broad range of expressed responses to a literary work. A. W. Foshay, then director of the Horace Mann-Lincoln Institute, Teachers College, Columbia University, encouraged me to seek or devise such a method. My search became part of a study undertaken by International Educational Achievement, an organization of educational researchers from several countries which was trying to compare student achievement in many subjects. In literature, however, the main problem was not so much setting up norms of achievement as finding some basis for comparing an essay by a student from Belgium with an essay on the same story or poem by a student from the United States.

Finding such a basis has involved many people, all of whom contributed a great deal. Dr. Foshay, Robert Shafer, Lois Beilin, and

I formed the nucleus of the group. Victoria Rippere later joined us. After analyzing various critical formulations, we asked a number of critics and scholars to form a pool of statements about one literary work. Richard Adams, Robert Gorham Davis, Stanley Edgar Hyman, Lewis Leary, Marshall McLuhan, Josephine Miles, Walter J. Ong, S. J., Wilbur Scott, Arlin Turner, and Barry Ulanov contributed to this pool.

We later compared their writings and conversation with those of many students and teachers, all of whom wrote about the same work. From scrutiny of these documents, we drew the first list of elements. Successive lists were later scrutinized and criticized by Wayne C. Booth, James N. Britton, Jacques Dubois, D. W. Harding, Albert Hofstader, Roy Harvey Pearce, Louise Rosenblatt, James R. Squire, and Walter Sutton. To all of these I owe a great debt, as I do the students in this country, Great Britain, Belgium, and Germany whose essays provided a set of checks against the various formulations of the elements.

The study described here is designed to offer a specific formulation of content analysis acceptable to those engaged in research and understandable to those reading that research. It is not a report of findings, but an elaboration of a method and a setting forth of hypotheses. As the reader will soon discover, such a formulation is arbitrary; it sets its own ground rules. I have found these ground rules to be generally acceptable to my colleagues, although we realize that there must be some concession on the part of everyone.

A design for content analysis is not intended as a model for instruction, because it sets few priorities; yet those who teach as well as those who would conduct research may profit from this way of describing what people do. The elements of writing about a literary work, as discussed in this book, can lay the groundwork for the student or teacher who wants a distinct idea of what constitutes an expressed response to literature.

CHAPTER I

THE IDEA OF THE ELEMENTS

The most stimulating force on the teaching of literature in this century has undoubtedly been I. A. Richards' *Practical Criticism.*[1] Through his analysis and critique of the writings of a number of Cambridge undergraduates, Richards brought the scholars and critics of England and America to the realization that there was an educational, if not a professional, need to focus their attention on the text, on literary language and metaphor, and on problems of interpretation. He showed it to be necessary that one understand a work before he move on to judgment or historical investigation, and he raised the question (not yet answered) as to what an understanding of a literary text involves. These matters soon became important to teachers of literature and led to a revolution in the teaching of literature, a revolution heralded by the publication of *Understanding Poetry* in 1938.[2] Generally, most recent critical works are based on an acceptance of Richards' main position, and most texts and curricula in literature on an acceptance of Brooks and Warren. The quarrels are quarrels of emphasis and detail, for few have seriously contested Richards' point that "the only goal of all critical endeavours . . . is improvement in communication" (p. 11), communication between work and critic.

The influence of *Practical Criticism* has primarily been the influence of its conclusions, not that of its methodology, although Richards emphasizes the importance of the latter. This research report is addressed to the methodological problem. Richards' collation of similar statements about a specific work proved excellent for a small study from which prescriptive generalizations about a group are drawn. The method is not adequate, however, to a comparison of groups (British, American, and French students, or students who are thirteen years old and seventeen years old). What is lacking is a means of characterizing the typical pattern of a large group, and particularly a means of assuring a neutral, public, and comprehensive reading of a great number of essays. Though they were not Richards' purpose, the methodological problems *Practical Criticism* raises deserve as full a treatment as his conclusions have received.

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[1] (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1929).

[2] Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren, *Understanding Poetry* (3rd edition; New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1960).

The Origins of the Study

When I undertook to help plan an international study of the ways in which students, teachers, and critics in several countries and out of various traditions write about a work of literature, I found it mandatory to treat the methodological problem first. The study was supposed to examine these ways of writing against the background of educational goals and practice, of literary preference and habit, of school organization, and of socioeconomic status. Obviously we wanted a method of content analysis that would apply to a great variety of responses, that would be critically sound and neutral, and that would be readily comprehensible. Obviously, too, the usual labels—Marxist, Aristotelian, Freudian, formalist—could be tags that would close communication rather than open it.

We needed some means of describing the process or the constituents of writing about literature, whether that writing be critical or subcritical. Instead of considering a theory of literature or one of the literary work, we had to consider the person who read the work and wrote about his reading. Richards was concerned with that reader and writer also, but his terms did not seem to be sufficiently specific or detailed, and they dealt more often with stumbling blocks than with procedures.

Without entering into a lengthy discussion of aesthetics, I should observe that the term "literature" or "literary work" refers to a verbal communication that is an expression of the imagination or the intellect of the artist and that seeks to arouse an aesthetic response through the admixture of its content and form. It is, therefore, an aesthetic symbol (cf. Albert Hofstadter, *Truth and Art,* New York: Columbia University Press, p. 184), and although in literature form and content are inseparable, people do separate them for the purpose of analyzing the content of writing *about* literature; therefore, one must, however reluctantly, perpetuate that separation.

A recent work, *A Handbook of Critical Approaches to Literature,*[3] does attempt this sort of description by showing how the following approaches to a novel, a play, a poem, and a short story might appear:

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[3] Wilfred L. Guerin, Earle G. Labor, Lee Morgan, John R. Willingham. (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1966).

textual-linguistic, historical-biographical, moral-philosophical, formalistic, psychological, archetypal, and exponential (or typological). These categories, however, are not always distinct from each other and are not detailed enough for the analysis of essays. At the same time, they may allow the reader to categorize and dismiss an essay too easily. In an earlier study, James Squire deals with the constituents of response and creates seven categories (Literary Judgments, Interpretational Responses, Narrational Reactions, Associational Responses, Self-involvement, Prescriptive Judgments, and Miscellaneous)[4]. While these were close to what I needed, I found it necessary to go further than these broad categories and to see if I could avoid some of the overlap I sensed in Squire's categories.

A higher degree of discrimination would come if one turned to an inspection of the writer's [See footnote 6 on p. 5] counters or procedures. The procedures would be discrete operations, *elements* of writing about literature that an individual writer must draw from and combine in any number of ways in order to fashion his essay. These elements should include all the possibilities that lie open to the essay writer each time he confronts a literary work. Not all of them, of course, would he find valuable, but all would be available to him. Some the writer might ignore, some emphasize, some subordinate as he read a literary work and reported his reading. These elements are latent: they include not only those procedures that critics now term "critical" but also those which are subcritical and noncritical. Many do not think it is the writer's province, for instance, to rewrite the literary work, yet people do do this and great critics have done it. The elements must account for their doing it.

The Notion of Elements

I have specifically called the elements by that name to forestall two misconceptions: the first, that they are exhaustive; the second, that they are taxonomical. To the first, I should say that the elements describe what we have found so far in the course of our examination. Other elements may appear as we examine the work of more writers, particularly from cultures other than our own. The list of elements is based on wide reading in numerous critics from the time of Aristotle and in the writings of many students and teachers. They represent what I consider the significantly discrete procedures used by writers, and although I realize that finer or coarser discriminations may be considered significant by others, I am satisfied that my own are serviceable for description and perhaps useful to the teacher besides. In naming the elements, I tried to avoid both facile pigeonholing and fussiness without leaving chances for essays to be merely labeled and dismissed. To call an essay "Marxist" is to close thought; to call it a "typological political essay" is to indicate its domain and the thinking of its author but not to stigmatize it. The essay on a literary work, no less than the work itself, should be able to be described without being dismissed. The elements, then, are intended to be used descriptively, and to show, by the coalescence of several elements in a single essay, how an essay writer functions.

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[4] James R. Squire, *The Responses of Adolescents While Reading Four Short Stories*, NCTE Research Report No. 2 (Champaign, Ill.: National Council of Teachers of English, 1964).

That the elements are not taxonomical follows from the first point. The elements are grouped neither into hierarchies nor according to a single principle, but according to several principles: those of the posture of the writer and, within his posture, of varying relationships among elements. These relationships and the several principles they follow shall, I trust, become apparent to the reader. There is no formal arrangement of the elements from lower to higher, from simpler to more complex, from basic to decorative.

We have found the elements capable of describing the statements,[5] paragraphs, and essays of students, teachers, and critics in the United States, Great Britain, Germany, and Belgium. After brief training, a team of readers can assign an element number to every statement in an essay with a remarkably high degree of consistency. A figure showing the percentage of sentences in an essay devoted to each element gives an accurate, if statistical, picture of an essay; and this percentage, incorporated into a group mean, can give a more accurate picture of the typical approach of a number of students than could a subjective description.

The accuracy comes, I think, from the fact that the elements *describe* subject matter more than they *assert*, so that the reader is not seduced by the rightness or wrongness of an interpretation but can concentrate on how the student makes his interpretation. Even though the question of rightness and wrongness certainly is the concern of the teacher, a misinterpretation can best be corrected if the teacher knows the process by which it was derived. This idea is Richards' great contribution to the theory of this study.

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[5] We have used the term *statement* because we considered it more precise than any other we have found. A statement, for our purposes, is roughly equivalent to a main clause or predication. For reliable scoring, an arbiter marked each essay off into numbered statements, and all readers abided by the arbiter's decision. Similarly, the arbiter marked the essays into paragraphs, which roughly coincided with the indentions on the student's paper, or, if the paper was in outline form, into the major divisions of the outline. The system has proved generally manageable.

The Categories

The first problem in our deliberations was that of how best to think of the elements. Student essays, teacher questionnaires, and letters from critics who were asked to sketch out a "grammar" of the possible approaches to a given literary work showed that generalizations such as those of mimesis, pragmatism, expression, morality, and organicism would not suffice. The reason is that those generalized terms usually deal with the production of the work not its criticism, or they refer to aesthetic theory rather than the practices of people writing about the literary work. An examination of the responses indicated that the best division might be one based on the postures the writer takes towards the work, for the problem seemed that of describing the relationships between the writer[6] (and his world) and the text (and literature). Besides Squire's, some formulations of such postures have been made, notably René Wellek and Austin Warren's intrinsic and extrinsic, R. S. Crane's inductive and deductive, and Murray Krieger's and Eliseo Vivas' contextualism.[7] For our purposes, however, those formulations present simultaneous problems of imprecision and incompleteness. Some are imprecise in that they overlap and occasionally make classification of essays debatable. Some are incomplete in that they do not adequately cover all writing about literature, although they might cover much.

If one considers the writer or audience and his relationship to the other three traditional "elements" of aesthetic theory—the *work*, the *universe*[8] of which the work treats, and the *artist* (including the literary and historical context in which he operates[9])—one can see emerging four general relationships: the direct interacting of writer and work (including much of what hampers that interaction), the writer's viewing of the work and its author as objects, the writer's relating of the universe portrayed in the work to the universe as the writer conceives it to be, and the writer's judging of the work in relation to the artist, the universe, or the writer himself. These four relationships define the categories into which the elements fall.

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[6] For consistency, *writer* refers to the writer of an essay about a literary work, *author* to the author of the literary work, and *reader* to the person scoring the essay.

[7] René Wellek and Austin Warren, *Theory of Literature* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1942); Ronald S. Crane, *The Languages of Criticism and the Structure of Poetry* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1953); Murray Krieger, *The New Apologists for Poetry* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1963); Eliseo Vivas, *The Artistic Transaction* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1963). Cf. Meyer H. Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1953).

[8] I use Meyer Abrams' term (*The Mirror and the Lamp*, p. 6) for the "existing things" from which the subject of the work derives. The universe may be thought

Engagement-involvement, the first category, defines the various ways by which the writer indicates his surrender to the literary work, by which he informs his reader of the ways in which he has experienced the work or its various aspects. Often, engagement-involvement is the object of pedagogical disdain, since it can be highly subjective and unassailable by logic or even persuasion. Yet much excellent criticism can evolve from the writer's attempt to discuss his involvement with the work or his private reaction to it. Certainly that form of involvement that is the writer's assent to the work's existence, to the work as both literary event and literary fact, underlies all criticism.

The second category, *perception*, is almost self-explanatory: it encompasses the ways in which a person looks at the work as an object distinct from himself and, except that it is the product of an author about whom the writer might have knowledge, separate from the writer's consideration of the world around the writer. This perception (analogous to "understanding") is analytic, synthetic, or classificatory and deals with the work either in isolation or as an historical fact needing to be related to a context. If the perception is of the work in isolation, it may be of the work either as a self-enclosed entity or as the product of a craftsman. Thus, the writer may or may not refer to "the author" in talking about imagery or structure, for example, and in either case be doing the same thing as far as the elements are concerned—i.e., talking about imagery or structure. It seems a needless duplication to have two sets of parallel elements, one referring to such statements as "The work has a tripartite structure," the other to such statements as "The author has created a tripartite structure." Although it is interesting to distinguish between the two statements, one is never sure whether the difference

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of in a number of ways by different authors or by different writers considering the same work.

[9] This context may or may not coincide with the universe of the work. *Ivanhoe's* universe is medieval England, Sir Walter Scott's context is Regency Scotland, and certainly his context influences his construction of his universe.

is a real distinction between two acts of perception or merely the result of some teacher's rhetorical shibboleth. It seems more productive to beg this question and to deal with others.

One other question about the elements of perception is whether or not they really refer to the actual work. When one speaks of a writer's noticing the rhythm of a poem, is one speaking of the rhythm apart from the writer's perception or of the rhythm as it is perceived? To avoid getting into an epistemological spider web and at the same time to allow the reader of an essay to classify a "wrong" statement (that a writer says a poem has five lines, when it has six), it is best to affirm that we are talking about perceived phenomena. Although the terms for the elements of perception might indicate that the elements refer to the phenomena themselves, these terms are used as a shorthand and always indicate the reported perception.

Once the writer has established the "otherness" of the work—that the work exists apart from the writer's experience of it—he may seek to connect it to the world he knows. Such a process I have called *interpretation*, the attempt to find meaning in the work, to generalize about it, to draw inferences from it, to find analogues to it in the universe that the writer inhabits. These analogues are often brought to the work from the world and resemble some of Richards' "stock responses" (other stock responses are related to engagement). The work is seen not as a literary object, or not purely as a literary object, but as a heterocosm that can be related to the world around the writer.

To clarify the distinction between perception and interpretation, the distinction between aesthetic object and aesthetic symbol may be useful. We can treat the work as if it were an object, observe its genus and differentiae, analyze its constituents, note its organization, and otherwise describe it as we think it is. This description is empirically verifiable—albeit within limits, because *das ding an sich* remains elusive. Interpretation, on the other hand, is a projective means[10] of grasping meaning. It may be seen as the intersection of the writer's world or experiences and the new experience that is the work. The writer cannot extract meaning from the work without reference to his prior experiences with words or their referents; he cannot approach the universe as portrayed in the work without recourse to the universe that he already knows. In a sense, therefore, every interpretation of a literary work is perforce unique, although there may be many common factors in a number of interpretations of the same work, enough certainly so that we can talk about a "basic meaning."

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[10] See Hofstadter, p. 184 f.

Interpretation can be either of the form or of the content. If it is of form, interpretation is the drawing of inference from a formal aspect of the work, which is to say that the formal aspect has significance beyond itself, or that it is a symbolic counter of some referent that may or may not be hinted at in the work. The significance of the referent may in fact be obvious to a great number of writers, but it is still not a part of the literary object; if only in the slightest degree, it must be adduced. If the interpretation is of the content, it can be as simple as the inferred generalization that is character analysis, for such generalization is based on a knowledge or a preconception about human nature. Generalization leads to more complex interpretations: that of seeing the work as imitative of the world, that of seeing the work as a distillation or abstraction from the world, and that of seeing the work as a medium of judgment or didacticism (perhaps the author's judgment or perhaps the writer's own judgment).

Evaluation, the last category, encompasses the statements about why the writer thinks the work good or bad. His judgment may be derived from either a personal or an objective criterion. The criteria define the elements. The order of elements in the category roughly parallels that in the other categories, for one's evaluation of a work is based on one's engagement-involvement, perception, or interpretation.

The four categories exist as the general framework of the elements, but they exist in no particular order of logic, psychology, or critical theory. In an essay and even in a writer's thought, any category may precede any other. That is to say, writing about one's engagement in a work may precede or follow from one's analytic perception or one's interpretation; one's judgment of a work may be instantaneous or may result from a rigid examination of the text. Further, a well-argued essay on a literary work may be largely devoted to one category or even a subcategory such as tone, the writer's impressions, or the derivation of symbols. The essay need not be a complete treatment of the work by the writer, but if it is well argued, it will be rhetorically effective and coherent.

CHAPTER II

SUMMARY OF THE ELEMENTS OF WRITING ABOUT A LITERARY WORK

Before defining the elements themselves, I should like to make a few general remarks. First, each element has been couched in language that aims at precision and neutrality. The terms are technical only where it seems necessary. Second, some of the general headings (those designated by capital letters) are not in themselves elements but groupings of elements. A glance at the code list of elements later in this report will show that the general headings are occasionally there included to cover the often unspecific statements of students. Third, many of the elements imply their negation: a writer who mentions the absence of imagery is, for purposes of this study, discussing imagery.

Fourth, some of the elements appear more specific than others; subject matter, for example, is not broken into content and theme, but metaphor is given a separate listing. This apparent disorder results from the fact that we have created separate elements for those matters which seem to occur frequently enough in discussions of a literary work to demand their separation from the next more inclusive element. Metaphor and irony are two such matters; other rhetorical and literary devices receive scattered attention from most writers. Certainly each element could be atomized, but for the practical purposes of analysis and teaching, such an operation is unnecessary. Granted, the elements are not adequate to a book like Davie's *Articulate Energy,* which delves into various aspects of poetic syntax, or Maud Bodkin's *Archetypal Patterns in Poetry,* but they need not be, for the analysis of this sort of work is not the aim of the elements. Anyone is free to subdivide the elements further. The groupings of the elements, finally, are my own, resulting from much discussion and much shuffling. The order, and even the existence, of some of the elements has been subjected to criticism and has now evolved into a series of groupings which are, I think, logical and defensible, although, like any ordering, arbitrary.

I. The Elements of Engagement-Involvement[1]

IA *Reaction to literature* is the writer's statement about his characteristic kind and degree of engagement. It is a statement about general stance and often introduces statements described by specific elements of engagement-involvement or perception.

A. In reading, I tend to look for something more interesting than whatever I could be watching on TV at the time.

B. Generally speaking, I don't like to read poems, especially not nature poems.

IA1 *Reaction to author* is a specific form of IA and, of course, involves knowledge of the author or his work.

A. I do not usually like Coleridge, but "Kubla Khan" was different.

B. Always in reading Joyce's stories I am filled with admiration for the man's great love for humanity, his erudition, and his wit.

IA2 *Assent* to the work refers to those statements in which the writer grants the work an existence that is different or separate from the writer's. It is the element of concession, the element that describes the writer's "willing suspension of disbelief" and, to a certain extent, his willingness to forego the sort of involvement that insists that the work is life. Assent is often stated negatively in the writer's refusal to accept the work or a part of it.

A. The poem is ridiculous for saying that "rosy-fingered dawn comes over the hill," because dawn has no hands, much less rosy fingers.

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[1] For scoring purposes, we have found it necessary to include general classifications for each of the categories. These classifications are used to describe those statements which are clearly in one of the four categories but are so general or contain a mixture of two or more elements in the category that they can be termed "Engagement General," "Perception General," "Style General," and "Interpretation General," or "Evaluation General." Examples of other general classifications appear under the appropriate heading; examples of these five follow:

Engagement General. I enjoyed the story as a whole but thought it should have another title.
Perception General. The story has six characters and several climaxes and many symbols.
Style General. The story has an identifiable style.
Interpretation General. I don't know what this story means.
Evaluation General. This is a good poem.

B. To appreciate Tolkien's novel, I had to forego my distaste for the supernatural; then I could read.

IA3 *Moral taste* refers to those statements about the morality of the work or of the author. Not a statement of evaluation, it compares the standards of the writer and the author on matters external to literature. It often bespeaks a refusal to assent to the work and accept its own terms. The term *moral taste* does not here refer to the use to which it is put when the writer describes his aesthetic predilections or aesthetic judgments. "The ending of *Huckleberry Finn* is in bad taste because it turns an Odyssey into a boy's romance" is an example of the latter (it would be a generic evaluation). "It is bad taste to describe the mating habits of man so graphically as does Mr. Lawrence" is an example of the taste defined by element IA3. When taste determines the writer's evaluation of the book, the statement would be an evaluation by the criterion of moral acceptability.

A. The novel occasionally hovers on the verge of being tasteless because of the author's clinical and descriptive approach to his subject matter.

B. With all the beautiful and fine things in this world, one would have been very appreciative had the author found something less intrinsically disgusting to write about.

IB *Reaction to form* is the expression of the writer's reaction to the way a work is written, as opposed to the content of the work. In critical terminology, this often appears as "impressionistic criticism," the attempt to transmute the received work of art into another work of art.

A. Slowly the poem filters into our consciousness, its images dissolving into our delight, its phrases being absorbed into the texture of our existence.

B. This poem is so flowery that it sometimes makes the reader want to sneeze.

IB1 *Re-creation of the effect of the work* often takes the form of metaphor; the writer seeks a personal, or occasionally an impersonal, analogue for a character, a line, or even the work as a whole.

A. The climax comes like a blow with a sledge hammer.

B. Hester Prynne stands forth in this novel like the Rock of Gibralter.

C. The poems in this volume seem to glow in the dark as we sense the writer's charging of words to their utmost.

IB2 *Word associations* constitutes a minor form of this type of re-creation, one in which the writer tells of his associations with a particular word. Often, the writer can be led by such associations to a bias towards or against the work. These associations are private associations, although they may follow from accepted connotations. Discussion of the latter would fall under the heading Diction (IIB1d).

A. The words of the title make me think of violence and coercion.

B. When I read a poem with the word "love" in it, I just get sick.

IB3 *Retelling the work in a form different from the author's* may be second-guessing; it may be the result of an internalizing of the work; or it may stem from dissatisfaction. In any case, it is not a judgment of the work itself but of the writer's experience with the work.

A. The story should have been called "Seymour spends a day at the beach."

B. If I had written the story, I wouldn't have made the ending so happy.

IC *Reaction to content* is the expression of the writer's reaction to the world of the work as if that world were not fictional.

A. I really enjoyed the battle scenes.

B. When Beth died, I thought my heart would break.

IC1 *Moral reaction to the characters or incidents* in the work is the most specific form of reaction, as well as a frequent form. Ranging from expression of simple like or dislike to an argued moral critique of the character which would rest on an interpretive analysis (IIIB3), the critique is always the writer's, not the author's or what the writer conceives to be the author's.

A. I think Huckleberry's behavior is disgraceful and disgusting.

B. The little girl shouldn't have stuck out her tongue at the nursemaid.

IC2 *Conjecture* stems from a refusal to accept the work as a self-contained phenomenon. The writer guesses about the past or the future—worries whether Hamlet will go to heaven, or what Lady Macbeth's childhood was. It is generally based not on the information in the text but on knowledge of the world at large. It differs from the interpretive inference (IIIB2) in this respect: the argument about Hamlet's future is based on belief in the Christian order and is really an argument about justifiable homicide; the discussion about Lady Macbeth might be a Freudian discussion based on the evidence of one sleepwalk. Opposed to this would be the interpretive inference about Hamlet's education given the knowledge of Renaissance education and the fact that Hamlet appears to be using his education in his soliloquies. A similar interpretive inference would be one about Macbeth's relationship to his wife, one garnered from their conversation. The difference between the two is that the interpretive inference stays as much as possible within the confines of the text; conjecture goes beyond those limits.

A. Mathilda must have had a very traumatic childhood.

B. I think that they will probably live happily ever after.

IC3 *Identification of the writer with the work* is the expression of the vicarious experience. The writer might say "I felt I was there" or otherwise express his submission to the world of the work.

A. I felt like the soldier, who didn't understand why the kid wanted to know about squalor either.

B. It seemed like I was right next to Fabrice on the battlefield.

IC3a *The relation of incidents to those in the writer's life* is a form of identification, which often leads to an autobiographical digression.

A. In my high school there was a boy very much like Holden.
B. I don't like doctors either.

II. The Elements of Perception

IIA *Citation of stance* refers to those statements that describe what the writer says he will look at in the work or thinks he should look at in it.

A. In examining this novel, I shall be mainly concerned with establishing its place in Smith's career and the place of his work in the mainstream of the American tradition.
B. In this paper we shall not be concerned with grammatical or syntactic aspects of Hopkins' verse.

IIA1 *Objective perception* refers to statements about the bare phenomenon of the work—its length, its divisions, its format, and the like.

A. The poem was first published in the *New Yorker* in 1953.
B. The book has been translated from the original Dutch.

IIA2 *Reading comprehension* is a "negative" element in that it usually applies to statements about lack of comprehension either of action or of language.

A. I didn't understand what happened to the girl.
B. Since I don't really know what "squalor" is, I didn't get the story "For Esmee with Love and Squalor."

IIB The *Perception of parts* may, perhaps, be thought of as literary analysis. It includes most of the analytic statements about the literary object. Certain interpretive statements are also of parts, but they are not distinctly analytic in that the writer bases his statements on his knowledge of the world outside of the work. The tangency of perceptual and interpretive analysis occurs in the writer's handling of symbol and symbolic form, metaphor, irony, and character. One should note that the first two subgroups below might be thought of as containing the elements "style" or "form" for which there are no general headings.

IIB1 The perception of the *Language* of a work is perception of the linguistic as opposed to the rhetorical aspects of the work.

Generally, the writer is examining these aspects of the work without regard to content save for the semantic aspects of diction.

A. In his late poems, Rilke consistently displays great linguistic inventiveness.

B. The rhythm and diction of Coleridge's "The Ancient Mariner" are consistent throughout the poem.

IIB1a *Morphology, typography, and transcription* includes the perception of odd devices of punctuation or printing, grammatical variation from a norm, and such matters as tense or mood of verbs.

A. The passive is used throughout the entire poem.

B. The author leaves out quotation marks.

IIB1b *Syntax and syntactic patterns* refers to sentence patterns, the ordering of sentences, and other stylistic devices which involve the linguistic fact (balance, periodicity, repetition, qualification, and the like).

A. Within the paragraph, the sentences grow shorter and shorter.

B. Pope consistently prefers coordination to subordination and keeps his couplets separate.

IIB1c *Sound and sound patterns* refers to the formal patterns of meter, rhyme, and versification and to cadence in prose as well as to alliteration, assonance, consonance, euphony, and other phonetic patterns.

A. In this story, the doctor's sentences become increasingly clipped.

B. The sonnet is regular in the octave, but in the sestet there are many anapestic substitutions.

IIB1d *Diction* involves the perception of semantic ambiguity as well as of word choice. The writer is dealing with the author's choice of words, not as they affect his attitude towards the work, but as they affect his understanding of it. Statements about cliché and usage would also be included.

A. The last words are highly ambiguous.

B. The diction is latinate up until the final couplet, where simple four-letter words are used for the poet's commentary.

IIB1d(1) *Etymology, lexicography, and dialect* is the element referring to statements about denotation and the history of the words.

A. Mark Twain uses several dialects in *Huckleberry Finn.*

B. The hero's name, Christopher, means, literally, "he who bears Christ," the suffix being derived from the Latin *ferre.*

IIB2 *Literary devices* might be considered a subset of language, but it seems that because they consist simultaneously of language and the referents of language, they should be isolated. They are also separated from the elements of IIC in that those elements describe the writer's discussion of literary devices in the context of the work as a whole; these describe the writer's identification of the device and his discussion of it in itself.

IIB2a *Rhetorical devices* includes the traditional figures except metaphor (below). As was mentioned earlier, a statement given this classification is one in which the writer points out the device and explains it but does not relate it to the work as a whole or interpret it.

A. The poem starts with a personification.

B. There is considerable hyperbole in the story.

IIB2a(1) *Metaphor and simile* includes any discussion of metaphor as a device, but not those statements in which the writer discusses "implied" or submerged metaphors. Although for schematic consistency metaphor might be included under the general heading, it is separate because so much writing about literature deals with metaphor that the tendency of an essay might be lost were the statements or paragraphs to be treated as discussion of rhetorical devices.

A. The author compares the horizon to a belt and the window through which he is looking to a buckle which closes "the vast expanse of our vision."

B. There are no metaphors in the story.

IIB2b *Imagery* seems to be the best term to use for the writer's discussion of particularity in a literary work. Although the term has semantic problems, it seems better than one like "representation" or "metonymy" (Kenneth Burke's terms in *A Grammar of Motives*[2]), because it is the more commonly accepted term.

A. There is very little imagery; most of the references are to concepts.

B. Bird and flight images are frequent throughout the novel.

IIB2b(1) *Allusion* refers to the work's specific references to other literary works, history, or myth.

A. The name *Edward* in the ballad "Edward, Edward" is obviously not an allusion to Edward the Confessor.

B. The author frequently alludes to actual historical personages in describing his main characters.

C. The war to which the characters constantly refer is the Trojan War.

IIB2b(2) The term *Conventional symbols* refers to the perception of the common symbolic referents of a culture which, wherever they appear in that culture's literature, cannot be taken as anything but symbolic. Although the perception of these seems close to interpretation, one can distinguish the two as follows: Blake's Lamb, in "Little Lamb, Who Made Thee," cannot but be identified with Christ and the Christian; his Tyger, however, is a tiger; and although it can be interpreted as symbolic of divine power or Christ or truth, such interpretation must be supported by reference to the Blakean Cosmos, not to a tradition.

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[2] (Cleveland, Ohio: World Publishing Company, Meridian Books, M1 43).

A. The dove which flies through the window in the reconciliation scene is manifestly the dove of grace.

B. The crown on the hero's tieclip symbolizes the fact that he is, in fact, the king.

IIB2c *Larger literary devices* includes dialogue, description, narration, melodrama, and those other devices that are not definitive of a genre but which describe parts of a work.

A. The opening chapters are largely devoted to description.

B. Dialogue alternates regularly with narration.

IIB2c(1) For the same reasons as for the separation of metaphor, *Irony* is separated from "Larger literary devices." It refers to the pointing out of verbal incongruities. It is debatable whether any irony is perceived, whether all is interpreted, but I think a distinction may be made between a statement about obvious disparities as in Swift's "A Modest Proposal" and a Popean couplet and those disparities which the writer must infer from only one given fact. The interpreted irony (IIIB1c) is that based on the writer's suspicion of the author, not on the conflict between values both of which are explicitly stated by the author. Irony, of course, is often a rhetorical device particularly in the juxtaposition of words. Few writers, however, make the distinction between the irony in a phrase and that in a sonnet or a short story. It therefore seems more fruitful to place the element where it can refer to the larger aspects of a work and include the smaller ones.

A. The constant references to sight and blindness provide a running irony in *Oedipus Rex*.

B. In "Proud Maisie," the robin's references to the grave make an ironic contrast with Maisie's questions about marriage.

IIB2c(2) *Presentational elements* refers primarily to dramatic and oral presentation. It refers to the writer's discussion of the work as spectacle or recitation rather than to its strictly literary nature.

A. The second stanza would be read in a loud voice.

B. At this point in the action, three of the onstage characters are dead and the fourth is rapidly dying in the front of the stage.

IIB2c(3) *Perspective* refers to those statements which describe the physical viewpoint of the writer and generally use the language of the visual or cinematic arts (e.g., "angle of vision," "shift in focus," "close-up").

A. Twain shows the empty river first and then moves up closer and closer to the boat and the people on it, like an opening of a movie.

B. All the scenes are written as if the author were three feet high.

IIB3 *Content*, of course, includes the people, places, and actions of the literary work whether they be obvious as in a narrative or a drama or somewhat obscure as in a lyric or meditative work.

IIB3a *Subject matter* refers to literal statements about content or theme.

A. The poem concerns the poet's experiences as he walks in the mountains.
B. The book is about a boy's growing up.

IIB3b The *Action* of a work refers to the writer's perception of the events of the work as the author has presented them and without any mention of their structure or order. The writer may quote, paraphrase, or summarize the action.

A. Then Holden says, "Ackley, get out of my room."
B. Then the poet tells us of the reasons for his loss of inspiration.

IIB3c The element of *Character identification and description* refers to the statements in which the writer simply tells who the characters are and describes them in the same terms in which they were presented, as well as to those statements which describe characterization (e.g., the distinction between flat and round characters). When the writer ascribes motives or seeks to analyze the character in psychological terms other than those given by the author, he is interpreting the character (IIIB3). Character identification refers also to the identification of speaker and audience, be they clearly defined as in a dramatic monologue or less clearly so as in the lyric.

A. The speaker of the poem is an old man who has seen a lot in his day.
B. The story is directed to an avidly listening group of parents and children.
C. The characters in the story are Rhoda Penmark and all her victims.
D. Yossarian is presented as the hero; the other characters are all types.

IIB3d *Character relationships* includes the discussion of static relationships between characters, primarily those of stance or attitude. When the writer describes those relationships as changing or dynamic, he is probably referring to action or plot.

- A. Although Ishmael is somewhat appalled by his strange bedfellow, they become good friends.
- B. At this point, the doctor and the girl are antagonists.

IIB3e *Setting or milieu* refers to the writer's perception of locale either in itself or in relation to the characters or action.

- A. The story is set in a western mining town around 1900.
- B. The scene of the poem is the poet's study as he remembers his past excursion.

IIC The term *Perception of the whole* is perhaps a loose one in that it includes elements which define statements that may not refer to the total work. The writer may, of course, refer to chapters or stanzas or even paragraphs, but the defining term seems clearer than such terms as "perception of relations," "complex perception," or "synthetic perception." These are perhaps precious terms, and terms which are less inclusive of the diverse elements that have been grouped together. Certainly perception of the whole is a complex act, but it seems to take three general forms: the perception of relationships, the perception of structure, and the perception of tone and point of view. All other discussion of the whole work is classificatory, interpretive, evaluative, or bespeaking engagement-involvement.

IIC1 *Relation of technique to content* is the term chosen for all those statements which relate the verbal, stylistic, or presentational means to the sense or effect of the work. It could also be called "rhetoric of the work." It differs from the interpretation of the means in that the writer does not say, "This device means X," but "This device is associated with X." The counterpart of this element in the interpretation of the work is the use of element IIIA2, the use of a part as a key to the interpretation of the whole. It is possible, of course, for a writer to move across categories in building up relationships and in proving an interpretive point as in the sentence, "The symbolic force of the tiger as wrathful god is enhanced by the repetition of the word *tiger* in the first line of the poem." This sentence would be classified IIC1, but if the thought were reversed and the perceived repetition is itself first interpreted and then related to the more general interpretation (as in, "The repetition of the word *tiger* in line 1 shows us the wrathful aspect of the deity"), such a sentence would be classified IIIB1a.

A. Jonas' use of paradox reflects the confused situation in which he finds himself.

B. The use of a spondaic foot in the middle of the line emphasizes the phrase "My God" and the questioning tone of the poem.

IIC2 The perception of *Structure* is virtually self-explanatory in that it refers to those statements in which the writer describes the order of the work. He may, however, describe it in one of six ways.

IIC2a *Relation of parts to parts* refers to the author's fitting of detail—be it a linguistic or literary device or a detail of content—to other details.

A. Darnay's trip to France is parallel to Lorry's trip in the opening of the book.

B. The use of *lie* in the first line of the sonnet foreshadows the puns on *lie* in the final couplet.

IIC2b *Relation of parts to the whole* is similar to IIC2a except that the relation is to the total work.

A. The section in which she breaks his glasses has all of the conflicts which are in the rest of the story.

B. The third stanza is the climax of the ode.

IIC2c *Plot or structure* refers to the ordering of actions or of characters as they act, not simply the actions or characters in themselves. With fiction or drama, it refers often to structural devices like the story within the story, the relation of prologue to play, and other structural devices. It also refers to the structure of poems, be it in formal or informal terms, in terms of division or organization. It may seem to some readers that all discussions of structure are interpretive, in that the writer is superimposing a structure. Yet more often than not, the writer is describing a pattern not fitting the work to some Procrustes' bed of form. When the writer does the latter, he may be either making a generic classification or putting the work into an allegorical framework.

A. As Lear goes down, Edmund goes up.
B. The poem moves from the despair of "Oh God" to the affirmation of "My God."
C. The story begins *in medias res.*
D. The end of the main story is abrupt, but then the final chapter provides the second side of the frame.

IIC2d The writer's description of *Gestalt* is the act by which he attempts to describe or characterize the whole work, often in terms of a metaphor from another medium ("it is circular," "it is a rondo").

A. The action describes a perfect tangent curve.
B. The poem is a sort of concerto with theme, variations, and recapitulation.

IIC2e *Allegorical structure* refers to the writer's description of those works like the beast fables or *Pilgrim's Progress* in which the allegorical level is readily available and overtly signalled. Many works signal an allegorical reading although the exact parallels are subject to debate. In such a case, like that of Kafka, the writer's observation of the allegorical nature of the work would be given this classification; the writer's particular reading, be it political, psychological, or archetypal, would be an act of interpretation.

A. The story is the kind in which the animals represent human characteristics.
B. K's struggle and capitulation before the law is certainly allegorical.

IIC2f *Logic* of the work refers to any treatment of the work or its parts in logical terms (syllogism, paradox, gathering of evidence, *inter alia*).

A. The poem is syllogistic: the first two stanzas give the premises, the last stanza the conclusion.

B. Paradox, ellipse, and *coincidentia oppositorum* are essential in this work.

IIC3 *Tone* is the most general term for those elements that describe the writer's discussion of tone, effect, mood, pace, and point of view. The first four of these seem less the expression of the writer's perception than of his subjective impression. However, critics who have long maintained the existence of these qualities as objective phenomena support their assertions about the tone of a work by reference to an assumption about the shared experience of an audience.

IIC3a *Description of tone* is in part the writer's establishing of the author's (or his speaker's) emotional attitude towards the material or towards the audience. The writer seeks to define an emotional state objectively. Included here would be discussions of the author's sincerity.

A. The speaker's tone is one of malevolence, mixed with the desire to mystify.

B. The writer is generally objective, but sometimes he is angry.

C. The poet does not seem to be sincere.

IIC3b Although it may seem out of place, *Effect* seems to be the most general term to use for all those instances in which the writer treats himself not as a private audience but as a part of the public. The effect he talks about is a generalized one, and it may be with reference to either his understanding or feeling about the work or its part.

A. The effect of the girl's biting the spatula is to make one reconsider her earlier actions.

B. This line brings the reader up sharp.

c. The repetition in the two halves of the sentence leads you to compare what is said in each half.

IIC3b(1) *Mood* refers to a specific effect that is related to the writer's general sense of the feeling arising from the work or a part of a work.

A. The work is pervaded by an eerie gloom.

B. The poem strikes one immediately as gay and sunny.

IIC3b(2) *Pace* also refers to the effect of the work, but it is the effect of a work as discourse, something that moves from beginning to end.

A. The story takes a relatively long time to get under way.

B. After that it is a fast-moving story.

IIC3c *Point of view or mask* is the literary (here both emotional and intellectual) vantage point of the author. One is tempted to say that point of view is intellectual attitude, but such a term is not quite sufficient. "Mask" refers, of course, to the literary use by the author of his speaker and operates on the assumption that the two are different entities.

A. The narrator is omniscient.

B. The poet is objective towards his material; no condemnation intrudes.

C. I don't think Swift agrees with Gulliver all the time.

IIC3c(1) *Illusion and aesthetic distance* describes the relationship between the author and his text. A variety of point of view, I think, it is the specific point of view of the author to the object he is creating or has created.

A. Pirandello carefully creates a dramatic illusion which he then as carefully destroys.

B. The stylization of the characters' speech and motion contributes to the creation of the dramatic illusion.

IIC3d The term *Orientation* applies to those statements which describe the perception in the work or of the author. A writer, for instance, may refer to the fact that an author works primarily in terms of the visual world. The orientation the writer is describing is the sum of the work's diction or imagery.

A. The author is visually oriented; there is no sound, or smell.

B. The author seems to see everything in terms of blood and fire.

IIC3d(1) *Image patterns* refers simply to the writer's discussion of recurrent images (IIB2b) or combinations of images. Such discussion may lead to a discussion of orientation.

A. Light imagery alternates with the imagery of shadows and darkness.

B. All the images refer to blood or the color red.

IID *Literary classification* refers to those acts which show the writer to be seeing the work either as a part of a larger entity called literature or as the product of an individual who lived, wrote, and thought at a specific time. Classification is, I think, different from interpretation, although in both cases the writer is making connections between the individual work and other known entities, because when the writer is classifying, he is doing so in the specific context of his knowledge of literary facts not in the more general context of his conceptions of the world in which he lives.

IID1 *Generic classification* refers to the writer's categorizing the work by genre or type. It also refers to the typing of parts of the work by literary convention or of marking similarities and differences between the work and other works of the same genre.

A. The novel is a comedy of errors, and the characters are the stock characters of Roman comedy.
B. This is a boy-meets-girl story.
C. The poem is a satire just like *The Rape of the Lock*.

IID1a *Classification by convention* refers to the act of defining the work or, more usually, its parts by a literary commonplace or rhetorical *topos* (e.g., "carpe diem").

A. The story is a good example of the *memento mori* theme.
B. The ivy growing around the trunk of the elm is an image used by authors for a long time.

IID2 Different from generic classification is *Traditional classification* which locates the work as a point on a literary continuum, not simply as a member of a species. The writer, of course, may go on to show when the work deviates from the tradition. This element also refers to the placing of the work in a literary school.

A. It is a Gothic novel.
B. Although the poem seems quite unlike most sonnets because of its typography, there are traces of the tradition throughout.

IID2a *Interpretive tradition* refers to the classification of the work on a continuum of meaning, rather than classification of form or content. Generally, the meaning is broadly characterized ("social protest," "psychological exploration"). This element would also cover statements that related a work interpreted archetypically to other works dealing with the same archetype.

A. This story is basically a social study.
B. The play is not one of intrigue and action but a work of psychological analysis.

IID2b *Critical dictum* is the act of relating a work to some critical formulation, like Aristotle's "definition" of tragedy.

A. In Schiller's terminology, it is a "naive" rather than a "sentimental" poem.

B. The play observes two of the three unities.

C. The play corresponds to the Horatian dictum that a work should please and instruct.

IID3 This group of elements describes the various ways by which the writer sees the work in the *Context* of biography or of history, particularly cultural and intellectual history. By this I mean that he is talking not about the work, but about its production. In a sense, he is writing more about the author than about the work itself, for, when he is writing about the latter, he is generally making interpretive assertions.

IID3a Classification of the work in the context of the *Author's canon* is the placement within a canon and the relationship among works (or parts of works) in that canon. If the writer is dealing with an excerpt, this element would describe his statements about the relationship of the excerpt and the whole work.

A. Salinger usually writes about the Glass family, and *Seymour–An Introduction* is no exception.

B. The concern for problems of reconciliation–talent with life, thought with action, life with living–is typical of Goethe's works.

C. This new story represents a radical departure from the author's previous works.

IID3a(1) Classification of the work may turn into the act of *Textual* discussion, with assertions as to what a word should be.

A. The critical edition lists three variants for the one character's name, and we shall stabilize on the first.

B. For "piscine" in line 3, we shall read "fishy," which is in fact more in keeping with the tone of the poem and which is penciled in the margin of an archive copy of the Ms. in the author's hand.

IID3b *Biographical classification* refers to all statements in which the writer relates the work or its parts to the author's life.

A. The author writes, in thinly disguised form, of his own experiences in the Navy.

B. The author of this doctor story was in real life a pediatrician.

IID3c *Intentional classification* refers to any discussion of the author's avowed intention and its relation to the work (cf. Wimsatt and Beardsley, "The Intentional Fallacy" in *The Verbal Icon*,[3] in which the difference between this element and IIIB5 is discussed).

A. As he says in the Second Preface, Jones intended this book as a warning to the glib and a balm to the inarticulate.

B. The author is trying to puzzle and mystify the reader.

C. Jarry wanted to *épater le bourgeois*.

IID3d This element is a bit broader than the three preceding, for the classification is in terms of the *Historical* setting of the composition of the work (not the setting in the work). The writer may relate the work to events at the time of the work's creation or to reactions to those events, or to a discussion of the original or subsequent audiences (not the audience of which the writer is a part).

A. Zola wrote this novel in reaction to the Dreyfus affair.

B. This work is the product of the Industrial Revolution.

C. The original audience at Jarry's *Ubu Roi* was indeed scandalized.

IID3e This element is similar to the preceding, but it is a classification in terms of *Intellectual history*, the history of ideas, or a philosophic or religious outlook held by the author. It includes a discussion of the acknowledged or unacknowledged influences on the work.

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[3] William K. Wimsatt, Jr., *The Verbal Icon* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press; also New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, Inc., Noonday Press, N 123).

A. The work may be described as the summation of the author's earlier ideas on conscientious objection and passive resistance.

B. Underlying the work is the author's resistance to accepting the consequences of the Sartrean view.

C. *In Memoriam* seems to anticipate the impact of Darwinism.

IID3e(1) *Sources* refers to the discussion of both literary and nonliterary written sources: histories, earlier forms of the work, treatises from which ideas or themes might have come.

A. Much of the dialogue of *The Deputy* was taken verbatim from records of the actual court proceedings.

B. The poem is a modern version of *Paradise Lost.*

C. Goethe's "Roslein" shows the influence of Herder's collection of folk poetry.

III. The Elements of Interpretation

These elements are divided into two groups, the first of which contains elements referring to those operations in which the writer relates parts of the work to his conception or knowledge of the world. These are ways by which he invests meaning in the work; the second group contains those elements which then define the type of meaning the writer has found. It may be that in a single paragraph, and possibly in a single statement, both the ways and the types will occur, but most readers seem to be able to decide which of the two has received the greater emphasis (generally emphasis can be determined through scanning the writer's predication).

IIIA *Citation of interpretive stance* describes those statements in which the writer indicates the inferences he usually draws from a literary work or otherwise describes his interpretive *modus operandi.*

A. When I read a poem, I always look for hidden meanings.
B. It is best to examine a story for its moral significance.

IIIA1 *Interpretive context* refers to the writer's description of the world to which he is comparing the work. If, for instance, he is going to talk about the political implications of the work, he might define the political universe of which he will treat.

A. The psychological scheme I am going to use is that of Freud.
B. Society is made up of the rulers and the ruled.

IIIA2 The use of a *Part as key to the interpretation of the whole* has been mentioned in the discussion of IIC2b and refers to the selection of a detail of content or form as support for an interpretation or as evidence for an interpretation. The element, in effect, describes the nexus between perception and interpretation.

A. The last stanza provides an answer to all the questions of meaning raised in the poem.
B. In the confrontation of Hamlet and his mother, we see all the psychological forces come into sharp focus.
C. The scene in which she breaks his glasses most clearly shows the victory of her emotion over his rationalism.

IIIB *Interpretation of parts* we have used as a general term rather than "tactics of interpretation" or "means of interpretation" because although the last two are accurate enough, the first seems most inclusive. Its corresponding term *Interpretation of the whole* is slightly misleading, because the writer may use one of these elements in referring to only a chapter, section, or stanza. More often, however, he discusses the work as a whole.

IIIB1 *Interpretation of style* refers to those statements in which the writer ascribes meaning to a stylistic device, often to describe the psychological state of the person who would use such a device, or to relate that device to a particular *weltanschauung.*

A. The use of feminine endings reflects the general laxness of the poet and his revolt against the strictness of eighteenth century prosody.

B. Dickens' highly metaphoric style in this scene shows his disdain for the sort of rationalism represented by Gradgrind.

IIIB1a When the writer derives *Symbolic value from stylistic devices,* he is in part relating form to content, but he is doing more: he is saying the form has content (cf. *inter alia,* Suzanne Langer, *Philosophy in a New Key*[4]). This element is close to rhetorical analysis on the one hand and to impressionism on the other. Its differences from those two can best be delineated by an example of metrical analysis. To say that the sound of a line echoes the sense is to speak of its rhetoric; to say that the sound is happy is to give one's impression of the line; to say that the line's sound typifies the despair of the speaker is to give it symbolic value. The first is a statement of relationship, the second of effect, and the third of meaning.

A. The lack of a period shows the poet's refusal to terminate the experience he is undergoing.

B. The character never uses a verb in his conversation, and the author uses this as a symbol of his lack of vigor.

IIIB1b *Inferred metaphor* differs from perceived metaphor —IIB2a(1)—in that it refers to the writer's statement that a part of the work (or the work) is the vehicle of a metaphor the tenor of which is not presented in the work (cf. I. A. Richards, *The Philosophy of Rhetoric*[5]).

A. The voyage is to be seen as a metaphor of the poet's self-exploration.

B. There is a submerged metaphor in the *Troilus and Cressida;* the references to disease seem to describe implicitly the moral state of the Greeks and Trojans.

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[4] (New York: New American Library of World Literature, Inc., MT 635).

[5] (New York: Oxford University Press, Galaxy Books, GB 131).

IIIB1b(1) The *Inferred allusion* is close to both the inferred metaphor and the inferred symbol, but it is different from the metaphor in that it is a specific comparison with another literary work, historical event, or a myth or legend. It differs from the derived symbol in that the writer does not assign symbolic value to the allusion. Of course, he may do so in a subsequent statement.

A. The name, "Edward, Edward," in the poem seems to be an allusion to Oedipus.

B. Although he does not so state, Orwell uses the pigs in *Animal Farm* to refer, I think, to the Gadarene swine.

IIIB1c *Inferred irony* has also been discussed; it refers to the writer's taking a part of the work to mean other than what it says based on evidence which gives only the statement. It also refers to most statements which deal with thematic ironies (e.g., cosmic irony).

A. We can guess that Pope's description of Belinda is ironic.

B. The moral given by the Mariner is ironic, for though he can tell what has happened to him, he does not really understand its meaning and can only come up with an inappropriate moral tag.

IIIB1d The *Derivation of specific symbols*, too, has already been defined [see IIB2b(2)] as that act by which the writer invests some object, image, or person with typological significance, which is not the traditional significance of the culture from which the work came.

A. In "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner," the moon becomes a symbol of the imagination.

B. The Mississippi River becomes, in *Huckleberry Finn*, a symbol of the nature-god.

IIIB1e *Inferred logic* refers primarily to those instances in which the writer assumes a logical relationship or disjunction to occur. It is particularly apparent when the writer discusses a paradox of which one half is not present in the work.

A. Keats has created a paradox; he wants to be as one with the nightingale, but we can tell that he knows he cannot be.

B. When he pretends to be Tom, Huck's situation seems paradoxical.

IIIB2 *Inference about the past or present* in the work has been mentioned in the discussion of conjecture. It may be used to describe those statements in which the writer does not move beyond the facts given in the text.

A. Claudius undoubtedly *did* kill Hamlet's father.

B. Although he hides it, Dr. Manette probably knew very early who Charles Darnay was.

IIIB3 *Character analysis* refers to all those statements in which the writer discusses motivation or makes generalizations about the character (without editorializing) or in any way moves beyond description. One might say that it refers to statements in which the writer relates the character to his observations about human nature—not to himself, to people he knows, or to personal standards.

A. The girl can be described as having the stubbornness that comes from fear.

B. Lear grows from a petty, foolish king to a humble human being.

IIIB4 *Inference about setting* refers to those statements which seek to establish the locale of the work from clues presented in the work itself.

- A. From the few details we have, the story must have taken place at the turn of the century.
- B. The way these people talk and the fact that they all seem to live in the kitchen make me think that they lived in a poor-class neighborhood.

IIIB5 *Inference about author* refers primarily to statements about intention and his relationship to his audience that are drawn from a reading of the text and other material but are not supported by the objective evidence that would characterize intentional classification.

- A. Shakespeare must have known that his audience expected to see Cressida as a wanton, for that is how he presented her.
- B. We can guess that Crane knew people who had been in the Civil War.
- C. I think Tennyson had Dante in mind when he wrote "Ulysses."

IIIC *Interpretation of the whole* is divided into three parts, each one of which is subdivided into elements which are often complementary across the three subdivisions. Varying from the practice so far, I shall define the elements of IIIC1, and then speak of IIIC2 and IIIC3 only in terms of their differences from IIIC1. This method will be, I trust, less tedious for the reader.

IIIC1 *Mimetic interpretation* refers to those modes of interpretation in which the writer sees the work as a mirror of the world either generally or in one of six specific ways. In effect, the writer says, "This is the way the world is." He sees the work as a heterocosm, another world to be connected to the one he knows from either his experience or his reading.

- A. This story is about both a doctor and his patient and a man and his idea.
- B. The poem shows us the world of the poet.

IIIC1a If a writer engages in *Psychological mimetic interpretation,* he is positing that the work mirrors the mind of man or of a group in any way and sees any conflict in the work as a mental one. As far as the elements are concerned, the particular psychological scheme is unimportant, and the term is here applied in its most general sense.

A. The novel shows us the growth in a person's understanding of himself.
B. Coleridge tells of the mental torments of a man.

IIIC1b The *Social mimetic interpretation* is one which refers to a world seen as the interaction of types of people, classes, groups or cultures, and of the individual and one of these social forces.

A. In *Hard Times* Dickens shows the impact of a constraining society on its members.
B. In *Heart of Darkness* we see a civilized man confronting the primitive world, and losing.

IIIC1c Differing from the preceding element is the *Political mimetic interpretation,* in which the interaction is of political forces, nations, or ideologies. It also includes the interpretation which deals with an individual and the kind of state in which he lives.

A. *A Tale of Two Cities* shows how an oppressive autocracy creates its own distinction.
B. Kafka's *The Trial* is about the individual caught in a system he did not create and which does not care for him.

IIIC1d The *Historical mimetic interpretation* refers to a world seen at a specific time in the past.

A. The tale of M. the Marquis in *A Tale of Two Cities* is a summary of the life of the peasant before the French Revolution.
B. Wordsworth's *Prelude* tells us what it was like to be a country boy in the late eighteenth century.

IIIC1e *Ethical* or *Theological mimetic interpretation* perhaps seems a strange yoking; yet we have found that they appear in close conjunction. The writer sees the world and the work as made up of moral forces or positions, and he often shades these off into theological forces. The work, he says, imitates ethical or theological dilemmas.

A. *Candide* shows us what happens to a rationalist when confronted with evil.
B. The story is about the problems a man faces when presented with the choice of love or honor.
C. The poem describes a man's finding of grace through his own work.

IIIC1f Seemingly redundant, the *Aesthetic mimetic interpretation* is one in which the writer says the work of art is imitating or talking about the way the artist works. It is perhaps a rather special interpretive mode, but it does occur. An aesthetic interpretation would also be one that discusses the fact that the work has meaning as an aesthetic experiment. This is an interpretation which might follow from a classification of the work (or a failure to classify it).

A. George in *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* is a writer, an artist, and the play is about the illusions an artist creates.
B. The poet is telling us about the way he makes a poem while he is in the process of making it.

IIIC2 The term *Typological interpretation* is used for all interpretive statements imputing that the work is not simply a mirror, but a presentation of a highly generalized or abstract pattern of the world. The writer says not "This is the ways things are," but "This is typical of a certain class of things." The work becomes metaphoric, symbolic, or allegorical in presenting a particular pattern of existence. One of the simpler distinctions between mimetic and typological interpretations is that between the articles *a* and *the*. The former is often an index of the mimetic, the latter of the typological. "The work shows a struggle between an intelligent man and an ignorant child" would be mimetic; "The work shows the struggle between the intelligent man and the ignorant child" is typifying the work and is close to "The work shows the struggle between intelligence and ignorance."

A. This poem seems to be an allegory of something.

B. The story tells of how innocence comes to grips with an uncompromising reality: social, moral, and political.

IIIC2a *Typological psychological interpretation*

A. Huck, having rejected his own father, finds a symbolic father in Jim.

B. "The Ancient Mariner" is about the mental retribution that follows from a crime against the heart.

C. Blake's "Garden of Love" presents the helplessness of the id in the face of the superego.

IIIC2b *Typological social interpretation*

A. *The Scarlet Letter* is a novel about the struggle of Puritan society and the free individual.

B. Kurtz's story is that of civilization destroyed by the savage impulse.

IIIC2c *Typological political interpretation*

A. Dickens shows us the confrontation of the autocrat and the peasant.

B. Orwell's novel is, of course, an allegory of the loss of individual liberty in the totalitarian state.

IIIC2d *Historical typological interpretation* refers less to discrete historical events than to historical patterns like the fall of empires or westward expansion.

A. This story is obviously allegorical, the doctor is the United States, the girl the underdeveloped nations.

B. *Animal Farm* describes the necessary cycle of democracy's fall to totalitarianism.

IIIC2e If a writer undertakes a *Philosophical typological interpretation*, he is apt to see the work as dealing with a particular philosophic system, or with characters as representing the parts of a philosophic problem.

A. Wordsworth's "Ode" is Platonic.

B. In *The Magic Mountain* we see the conflict of philosophical systems at the beginning of this century.

IIIC2f *Ethical-Theological typological interpretation*

A. The novel is a study in good and evil.

B. The poem shows how belief grows from skepticism.

C. The *Prelude* reproduces, in personal form, the Fall of Man.

IIIC2g *Aesthetic typological interpretation*

A. Kubla Khan is the poet and his pleasure dome is the poem.

B. Prospero is the artist who must necessarily return from the world of his art to the real world.

IIIC2h The *Archetypal typological interpretation* is necessarily one in which the writer sees the work as symbolic or allegorical with respect to some recurrent pattern such as fertility, the harvest, or the death of the god.

A. "The Ancient Mariner" presents the theme of death and rebirth, although the mariner does not really die.

B. *Huckleberry Finn* may be seen as combining elements of the Grail myth and of all other quest epics.

IIIC3 *Hortatory interpretation* may seem a pejorative term but is not meant as such. The writer sees the work as a statement of what should be and sees the author as overtly or covertly hortatory. It applies, of course, to those interpretations that see the author as critical of what he portrays.

A. The author is trying to teach us a lesson, I think.
B. The poem has no moral.

IIIC3a *Psychological hortatory interpretation*

A. Blake tells us not to let our egos be repressed.
B. William Carlos Williams shows us how a man should behave in the face of something he cannot control rationally.

IIIC3b *Social hortatory interpretation*

A. In *Hard Times* Dickens shows us the evil in the business society.
B. Conrad wants us to learn that civilization is only a veneer.

IIIC3c *Political hortatory interpretation*

A. Dickens shows us that revolution may bring about evil as bad as those against which it is fighting.
B. The story urges us to beware the inroads of Fascism.

IIIC3d *Historical hortatory interpretation*

A. Kafka shows us how the Romans should have behaved when the barbarians invaded.
B. Dickens is criticizing both the aristocracy and the bourgeoisie at the time of the Revolution.

IIIC3e *Ethical-Theological hortatory interpretation*

A. The poem is a serious questioning of the justice of God.
B. The story warns of the consequences of greed and pride.

IIIC3f *Philosophical hortatory interpretation*

A. Mann, in *The Magic Mountain,* shows the futility of any philosophic system.

B. The poem is a defense of the Aristotelian mean.

IIIC3g *Aesthetic hortatory interpretation*

A. Joyce, through Stephen, tells us of his ideal artist.

B. In "The Nightingale," Coleridge attacks the insincere poet.

IV. The Elements of Evaluation

These elements are cast in the form of criteria, either for a subjective or objective appraisal of the work.

IVA *Citation of criteria* refers to statements defining the criteria without reference to the work.

A. These are good poems—clear, intimate and living. This is just another way of saying "simple, sensuous and passionate"—which, I think we were once taught, is what really good poetry must always be.

B. A good novel should deal with serious issues.

IVB *Affective evaluation* uses the criterion of emotional appeal. The work succeeds or fails either in moving the writer, or in presenting its dominant emotion with sufficient intensity.

A. The story is singularly stultifying.

B. "A Snake of One's Own" is a beautiful and moving story.

C. A fascinating and gripping book.

IVC *Evaluation of the author's method* refers to the various criteria by which the writer judges the way in which the work is created. These are the aesthetic criteria.

IVC1 *Formal evaluation* uses the criterion of aesthetic order. The work may or may not fulfill its function, succeed or not to use all of its parts coherently like a good ballet. Often the untrained writer will say that he does not "like the looks" of the work; this, too, expresses a formal criterion, albeit weakly.

A. Despite its length, the novel holds together well.

B. The author has succeeded in connecting each incident to every other.

IVC2 *Rhetorical evaluation* uses the criterion of effective use of form or of adequacy of parts to the whole as perceived or interpreted.

A. Its various stylistic virtuosities contribute little if anything to the meaning of effect of this book.

B. The alternation between enjambment and end-stopped lines neatly underscores the speaker's vacillation between enthusiasm and caution.

IVC2a *Typological rhetoric* is one of the rhetoric of symbols: the writer might see the work as reaching for a symbolic structure and succeeding or failing in achieving it.

A. In *Huckleberry Finn,* Mark Twain begins by creating a symbolic structure but fails in not following it up.

B. He works out a good allegory.

IVC3 *Generic evaluation* uses as its criterion the abstract notion of genre. A simple example is the writer who says, "It's a bad poem; it does not rhyme."

A. The poem is good blank verse because its rhythm is regular.

B. This is a poor play because the author gets his characters on stage and then forgets to get them off.

IVC4 *Traditional evaluation* uses a criterion akin to that of genre, but less rigid; it judges the work according to the history of its type in form or content. Its criterion, then, is flexible, since tradition is, within limits, continually modified.

A. The novel almost fails because the author has moved outside the main stream of fiction writing.

B. The sonnet is skillful in bending the traditional form without breaking it.

IVC4a *Originality* is an aspect of the traditional evaluation that deserves separate treatment if only for the fact that as a criterion it does not have to refer to a tradition, but is antitraditional, as were many of the judgments of Young and Hurd in the eighteenth century.

- A. The poem is trite and hackneyed.
- B. The author has succeeded in writing a "different" novel.

IVC5 *Intentional evaluation* uses the criterion of the author's expressed or inferred intention.

- A. In this book the author sets out to blast American capitalism, and indeed he does.
- B. If we were to measure the work by its manifesto, we should find it barely recognizable and sorely lacking.

IVC6 *Multifariousness* is the criterion of levels. The writer asks of literature that it be interpreted in many ways and judges the work accordingly.

- A. This story will undoubtedly challenge perceptive critics for generations to come.
- B. The *Divine Comedy* is great because it can be read on so many levels.

IVD Evaluation of the *Author's vision* refers to those criteria which judge the sufficiency of what the work is presenting.

IVD1 *Mimetic plausibility* is the criterion of surface credibility, or, on another level, of the ability of the author to create a world to which the writer can relate himself.

- A. This story is easily and immediately believable.
- B. In the person of Richard, the author presents us a child too glib and serious for credibility.
- C. If life were as bleak as the author presents it, we would all be too busy preserving ourselves to read novels such as this.

IVD2 *Imagination* is the term, often loosely used, referring most specifically to a judgment of the ability of the author to transmute experience and to make the work both stimulating and credible.

A. The story fails because the author does not get above his material but remains bogged down in the day-to-day story of his hero.
B. The value of the poem lies in its creation of an experience that is vibrant and alive.

IVD3 *Thematic importance* is the criterion of seriousness. It asks of the work that it have an import equal to the writer's set of values. It differs from IVD1 in that it asks, "Does the author represent a world worth my attention?" and IVD1 asks, "Does the author represent a world in which I can believe?"
A. The work is an example of much ado about nothing.
B. The theme is too weighty for this brief poem.
C. The story is trivial and pointless.

IVD3a *Sincerity* is like thematic importance in some ways, but it borders on the affective evaluation and arises both from interpretation and engagement. As a criterion it asks that the author's point of view coincide with the writer's own.
A. It is a good novel because it is written with conviction.
B. We cannot trust a poem that toys with sentiment.

IVD4 *Symbolic appropriateness* is the criterion of congruence of patterns. It asks of the work that its abstraction of the world accord with the writer's abstraction.
A. On its most basic level, the story presents a convincing analogue of the human condition.
B. The writer asks us to see the world as a struggle of religion and science, but that is too simple.

IVD5 *Moral significance* is the criterion of lessons. "Has the work taught me anything?"
A. The novel is worthwhile, for it does not tell us how to live, but what life is.
B. The poem lacks any capacity to enlarge our understanding.